

C. E. W. Long

THE
Dissenting MINISTERS
VINDICATION

Of Themselves,
From the Horrid and Detestable Murther
OF
King CHARLES the First,
OF
Glorious Memory.

With their NAMES Subscribed, about the
20th of January, 1648.

Isaiah 62. 1. For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

Prov. 24. 21, 22. MY SON, FEAR THOU THE LORD AND THE KING, AND MEDDLE NOT WITH THEM THAT ARE GIVEN TO CHANGE.

FOR THEIR CALAMITY SHALL RISE SUDDENLY, AND WHO KNOWETH THE RUINE OF THEM BOTH?

L O N D O N,
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Glorious Memory

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I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof be brought, and
 the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth.
 Prov. 24. 21. MY SON, FEAR THOU THE LORD AND THE
 KING, AND MIDDLE NOT WITH THEM THAT ARE GIVEN
 TO CHANGE.
 OR THINE COUNSELL SHALL BE REVERSED, AND THOU
 KNOWEST THE STATE OF THINE KINGDOM.

A
VINDICATION
OF

The MINISTERS of the GOSPEL, in and about London, from the unjust Aspersions cast upon their former Actings for the Parliament, as if they had promoted the bringing of the KING to Capital Punishment.

IT cannot be unknown how much we, and other Ministers of this City and Kingdom that faithfully adhered to the Parliament, have injuriously smarted under the scourge of evil Tongues and Pens, ever since the first eruption of the unhappy differences and unnatural War between the King and Parliament, for our obedience to the Commands and Orders of the Honourable Houses, in their Contests with his Majesty, and Conflicts with his Armies.

We are not ignorant of the over-busie entermedlings of Prelates and their Party heretofore, in over-ruling Civil Affairs to the great endangering of Kingdoms, and of this in particular, when private interests, ambitious designs, revenge, or other sinister ends, engaged them beyond there sphere. Howbeit, it cannot reasonably (as we conceive) be denied, that Ministers, as *Subjects*, being bound to obey the Laws, and to preserve the Liberties of the Kingdom, and having an interest in them, and the happiness of them, as well as others, may and ought, (without incurring the just Censure due to busie-bodies and incendiaries) to appear, for preserving the Laws and Liberties of that Common-wealth whereof they are members, especially in our case, when it was declared by the Parliament, that all was at stake, and in danger to be lost. No, nor as *Ministers* ought they to hold their peace, in a time wherein the Sins of Rulers and Magistrates as well as others, have so far provoked God as to kindle the fire of his wrath against his people. And yet, for this alone, the faithful Servants of God, have in all Ages, through the

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malice

malice of Satan and his instruments been traduced as Arch-incendiaries, when only their Accusers are indeed guilty of both laying the train, and of putting fire to it, to blow up a Kingdom.

An *Ahab* and his *Sycophants* think none so fit to bear the odium of being the grand *Troubler of Israel*, as *Elijah*. Thus, the Popish device was, to charge the *Gun-powder Treason* (had it taken effect) upon the *Puritans*: And, if you believe *Tertullus*, even a *Paul* is a *pestilent fellow*, a *mover of Sedition throughout the world*, a *ring-leader of a Sect*, and what not, but what he is? Yea, *Christ* himself (though a *Friend to Monarchy*, even of heathenish *Rome*) is proclaimed *an enemy to Caesar*, to open a way to his destruction, by their malice, who never cared for the interest of *Caesar*.

Wherefore, although *with us*, who have had experience of like usage, it be a small thing to be thus judged of men, when we regard only our own particular persons: For, if they call the *Master of the house Beel-zebub*, how much more those of his household? yet when we consider how much it concerns the honour of our Master, and the good of all, to preserve our ministerial Function immaculate (our good names, being in that relation as needful to others, as a good conscience to our selves) we dare not but stand by and assert the integrity of our hearts, and the innocency of all our actings (in reference to the King and Kingdom) for which we are so much calumniated and traduced.

This we are compelled to at this time, because there are many who very confidently (yet most unjustly) charge us to have been formerly instrumental, toward the taking away the life of the King. And because also there are others who in their scurrilous *Pasquils* and *Libels* (as well as with their virulent *Tongues*) present us to the world as a *bloody seditious Sect*, and traitorous *obstructors*, of what all the godly people of the Kingdom do earnestly desire for establishing of *Religion and Peace*, in that we stick at the *Execution* of the King, while yet we are (as they falsely affirm) content to have him *convicted* and *condemned*: all which we must and do from our hearts disclaim, before the whole world.

For when we did first engage with the *Parliament*, (which we did not till called thereunto) we did it with loyal hearts and affection towards the King, and his posterity. Not intending the least

least hurt to his Person, but to stop his Party from doing further hurt to the Kingdom; not to bring his Majesty to justice (as some now speak) but to put him into a better capacity to do justice: To remove the wicked from before him, that his Throne might be established in righteousness; not to dethrone, and destroy him, which (we much fear) is the ready way to the destruction of all his Kingdoms.

That which put on any of us at first to appear for the Parliament was, *The Propositions and Orders of the Lords and Commons in Parliament* (Jun. 10. 1642.) for bringing in of Mony and Plate, &c. wherein they assured us that whatsoever should be brought in thereupon, should not be at all employed upon any other occasion, than to maintain *The Protestant Religion, The Kings Authority, his Person in his royal Dignity, the free course of justice, the Laws of the Land, the Peace of the Kingdom, and the Privileges of Parliament, against any force which shall oppose them.*

And in this we were daily confirmed and encouraged more and more, by their many subsequent declarations and protestations, which we held our selves bound to believe, knowing many of them to be godly and conscientious men, of Publick Spirits, zealously promoting the common good, and labouring to free this Kingdom from Tyranny and Slavery, which some evil Instruments about the King, endavoured to bring upon the Nation.

As for the present actings at *Westminster*, since the time that so many of the Members were by force secluded, divers imprisoned, and others thereupon withdrew from the House of Commons (and, there not being that conjunction of the two Houses, as heretofore) we are wholly unsatisfied therein, because we conceive them to be so far from being warranted by sufficient Authority, as that in our apprehensions they tend to an actual alteration (if not subversion) of that which the *Honourable House of Commons*, in their *Declaration of April 17. 1646*: have taught us to call the *Fundamental Constitution and Government of this Kingdom*, which they therein assure us (if we understand them) they would never alter.

Yea, we hold our selves bound in duty to God, Religion, the King, Parliament and Kingdom, to profess before God, Angels and Men, That we verily believe that which is so much feared

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to be now in agitation, the taking away the life of the King in the present way of Tryal, is, not only not agreeable to any Word of God, the Principles of the Protestant Religion (never yet stained with the least drop of the Blood of a King) or the fundamental Constitution and Government of this Kingdom; but contrary to them, as also to the Oath of Allegiance, the Protestation of May 5. 1641. and the Solemn League and Covenant; from all, or any of which Engagements, we know not any Power on Earth, able to absolve us or others.

In which last, we have sworn (with hands lifted up to the most high God) That we shall with sincerity, reality, and constancy, in our several vocations, endeavour, with our Estates and Lives, mutually to preserve and defend the Rights and Privileges of the Parliaments, and the Liberties of the Kingdoms, and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's Person and Authority, in the defence of the true Religion, and Liberties of the Kingdoms: That the world may bear witness with our Consciences of our Loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his Majesty's just power and greatness.

And we are yet further tied by another Article of the same Covenant; Not to suffer our selves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combination, perswasion or terrour, to be divided or withdrawn from this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary party, or to give our selves to a detestable indifferency, or neutrality in this Cause which so much concerns the glory to God, the good of the Kingdoms, and honour of the King: but shall all the days of our lives, zealously and constantly continue therein against all opposition, and promote the same according to our power against all lets and impediments whatsoever. And this we have not only taken our selves, but most of us have by command of the Parliament administred it to others, whom we have thereby drawn in to be as deep as our selves in this publick Engagement.

Therefore, According to that our Covenant, we do in the Name of the great God (to whom all must give a strict account) warn and exhort all who either more immediately belong to our respective Charges, or any way depend on our Ministry, or to whom we have administred the said Covenant (that we may not by our silence suffer them to run upon that highly provoking sin of Perjury) to keep close to the ways of God, and the rules
of

of Religion, the Laws, and their Vows, in their constant maintaining the true Reformed Religion, the fundamental Constitution, and Government of this Kingdom, (not suffering themselves to be seduced from it, by being drawn in to subscribe the late Models, or *Agreement of the people* *, which directly tends to the utter subversion of the whole frame of the fundamental Government of the Land, and makes way for an universal toleration of all Heresies and Blasphemies (directly contrary to our **Covenant**) if they can but get their Abettors to cover them under a false guise, of *the Christian Religion*) as also in preserving the Privileges of both Houses of Parliament, and the Union between the two Nations of *England and Scotland*: to mourn bitterly for their own sins, the sins of the City, Army, Parliament, and Kingdom, and the woful miscarriages of the King himself, (which we cannot but acknowledge to be many and very great) in his Government, that have cost the three Kingdoms so dear, and cast him down from his Excellency into an horrid pit of misery, almost beyond example. And to pray that God would both give him effectual Repentance, and sanctifie that bitter Cup of Divine Displeasure, that the Divine Providence hath put into his hand; as also that God would restrain the violence of men, **that they may not dare to draw upon themselves and the Kingdom, the blood of their Sovereign.**

And now, we have good Reason to expect that they who brought us under such a bond, and thereby led us into the necessity of this present **Vindication** and manifestation of our judgments and discharge of our consciences, should defend us in it. However, we resolve rather to be of their number that tremble at his *Terrours* who is a *consuming fire*, and will not fail to *avenge the quarrel of his Covenant*, upon all that contemn it, than to be found among those who *despise the Oath by breaking his Covenant* (**after lifting up the hand**) although it had been made but in Civil things only, and that with the worst of men.

* Declared by both Houses (for the substance of it) to be *destructive to the being of Parliaments, and to the fundamental Government of the Kingdom*, in Decemb. 1647. yea, condemned heretofore by the General and his Council of War, and one of the Souldiers shot to death for promoting it.

Query, Whether 'tis any Testimony of the Sincerity of this VINDICATION, the not Observing the 30th of Jan. as the Laws have appointed? or, Whether the present DISSENTERS have not overrun their FOREFATHERS? Lev. 26. Ezek. 17. 2 Sam. 21.

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